

Steady platform for IP and its customers through the storm

Preview to the EUIPO's SP2025
mid-term achievements

April 2023



ED Foreword

The EUIPO and the network of networks centred on the IP Offices of the EU Member States (MS), emerged from the COVID-19 lockdowns and subsequent economic and geopolitical uncertainty as an even stronger force. This will allow them to deliver positive results for EU citizens and businesses.

Faced with unprecedented challenges, including the war in Ukraine, and the return of double-digit inflation combined with more economic turmoil, we must continue working together and adapting to new realities.

As with all major disruptive events there is a need to evaluate and adjust where needed. But the overall message of a steady hand and consistency of direction must remain the overriding guide in our strategic direction and priorities. This report focuses on some of the key achievements of the EUIPO during these challenging times and on the impact the economic situation may have on priorities going forward. These aspects will be fully detailed in the upcoming mid-term evaluation report of the Strategic Plan 2025 (SP2025) due in the course of 2023.

The five-year period from 2018-2022, coinciding with the beginning of my mandate as Executive Director, covers the preparations that the EUIPO made to become an IP Office of the future through the design and implementation of SP2025 and its response to COVID-19. It also includes the first years of the current Strategic Plan, launched as COVID-19 was underway. As such, this summary report

provides an evaluation of where we are and a validation that the foundations set in SP2025 remain sound for the next phase of how the EUIPO and the IP system must continue to evolve.

This extremely difficult period was marked by a number of significant achievements to build upon:

- Increasing the resilience of the IP system and helping deliver more direct action on the ground linking the EU's innovation and IP policies to the needs of businesses;
- Improving customer service by moving from a 'one-size-fits-all' perspective, taking account of the needs of different businesses, throughout the various crises and the resulting volatility;

Managing through the pandemic in a financially sound manner while contributing to the search for solutions, and creating an Office that is more resilient, agile and strongly motivated.

These achievements were driven by a true spirit of partnership and mutual support, backed by our political leaders, the European Commission, and all the diverse players that make up a modern and progressive IP ecosystem.

I am happy that the EUIPO has not only fulfilled its extended mission touching on most aspects of modern Intellectual Property but has also been able to help members of the European Union Intellectual Property

Network (EUIPN) deliver important actions on the ground.

Financial support, using funds ultimately generated by rights holders, has continued to move from the centre to promote excellence of service at IP Offices in the EU, with modernised integrated systems and processes. In addition, the Office has decisively integrated the EUIPN in the coordinated delivery of EU strategies aimed at recovery and economic growth, including helping SMEs, which are so important in ensuring progress and economic well-being.

This must continue to be the ultimate aim of a properly functioning IP system fit for the 21st century and ready to overcome whatever challenges the future will bring.

Christian Archambeau

Executive Director, EUIPO



1. Before the storm

Before COVID-19 the economic picture was one of fairly steady progress. Looking forward, in January 2020 the International Monetary Fund projected more of the same with global GDP growth expected to rise from around 2.9 % in 2019 to 3.3 % in 2020 and 3.4 % in 2021 ⁽¹⁾.

Successive Strategic Plans by the EUIPO had already created a network of networks taking account of most elements of the IP system. The pace of technological change and the potential impact it would have on our future work were the source of some concern. However, there was broad consensus on the need for the different players in that system to work more closely and take on a more direct role in supporting industry and SMEs.

During 2018-2020, European and international cooperation continued to develop, aided by the sharing of technology and the increasing importance of the global databases such as TMview and DesignView. The growing interest of Chinese businesses in EU titles was already evident and by 2019 this was a significant part of the EUIPO's business, with over 15 000 Chinese applications for EUTMs that year alone.

Within the EU, in the IP Offices the roll-out of sophisticated online tools and their further development continued, accompanied by a sense that the technical transformation of the IP system had been largely achieved and

it was now time to focus on getting better results for customers.

Keeping up with extremely high expectations of our users of the IP system regarding the new technologies and technical level has been a challenge for the Estonian Patent Office. Cooperation with the EUIPO has enabled us to meet these high expectations and deliver professional high-level services supported by modern technical solutions and we have been honoured to be one of the piloting national offices for so many projects. For our customers, the most welcomed aspect of the more coherent IP system is the feeling of appreciation and equal treatment combined with clarity and comprehensibility. It is much more effective to share common language and understanding within our joint network of all IP users on all levels.

Margus Viher, Director General, The ESTONIAN PATENT OFFICE, EUIPN 10 years connecting the world of IP, 2021

Among the priorities most widely agreed upon were the need for a 'joined-up IP', including more effective enforcement of IP rights, and better access to these rights by SMEs, especially given the globalisation of trade and the opportunities and challenges of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

To paraphrase the World Economic Forum's report ⁽²⁾: 'This latest Revolution represents a fundamental change in the way we live, work and relate to one another... forcing us to rethink how countries develop, how organisations create value and even what it means to be human.'

Faced with this challenge the Office concentrated on using the power of the digital world and making significant progress towards its goal of creating a one-stop-shop where customers can access a wide range of information, processes and tools – in addition to the registration of IP rights – to help them on their [IP digital journey](#).

In this atmosphere the EUIPO intensified efforts to adapt its own systems and workforce for the challenges of a global and digital marketplace where flexibility and adaptability would be pre-requisites of success.

One of the most tangible results of this were a series of decisions during 2018-2020 designed to bring remote working within the reach of all members of staff, freeing them to work from anywhere, anytime on both personal and team tasks. This complemented

the already well-established shift to online filing and the support for similar measures in the Member State IPOs.

This is the background in which the EU IP system entered the third decade of the 21st century as a united, modern and flexible instrument ready to face what was generally expected to be a predictable future. As is well known, this expectation was overtaken by subsequent events, outstripping the most pessimistic or outlandish forecasts.

¹ <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/Issues/2020/01/20/weo-update-january2020>

² <https://www.weforum.org/focus/fourth-industrial-revolution>

2. The new reality

The COVID-19 pandemic, and the response of the IP system, including the EUIPO's response, have been detailed elsewhere, but this unprecedented event and its wide-reaching economic and social consequences have cast a long shadow.

Far from being 'business as usual', the global economy went into sharp decline in 2020, showing negative growth of -3.1 %⁽³⁾. Since then, the fluctuations have been extreme, producing sharp and unpredictable changes in the demand for IP rights including periods of rocketing numbers of filings as companies struggled to adapt to a shift to online trading.

The EUIPO, headquartered in Alicante, in line with the health and legislative advice of the Spanish authorities, entered a period of strict lockdown in March 2020. The combination of infrastructure and readiness for the digital environment allowed the seamless transfer to 100 % remote working in the space of 24 hours, allowing the Office to operate with no visible impact on the EUIPO's commitments to its customers or negatively affecting its operations. This was followed within six months by a switch to full hybrid working, as soon as conditions allowed, and a return to near normal working conditions, well before many other national or international entities.

This progressive return to the workplace was accompanied by continued flexibility and an increased use of teleworking arrangements

³ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG>

allowing a harmonious balance between the desire of staff for flexibility, the fluctuation in health national provisions and the requirements of the organisation. In spite of the enormous pressure caused by adapting to a new way of working, staff morale and the EUIPO's performance remained high.

Notably, the 2020 Staff Satisfaction Survey showed that scores had improved in most areas at Office level, in particular regarding views on management, technology support and the appreciation of individual initiative at the EUIPO where the results went up by over 10 points. Further increase of staff satisfaction was seen in the Staff Satisfaction and Engagement Survey in 2022 across all comparable questions with the Staff Satisfaction Survey 2020. Notably, staff engagement was 87 %, which is the highest score ever achieved at the EUIPO, with management, communication and customer focus emerging as the top areas of strength. Overall, the results exceeded the scores of comparable public and private sector organisations in Europe (the EU norm) on most questions.

87% Staff engagement

for 2022 is the highest score ever achieved at the EUIPO.

Customer satisfaction also improved, under these exceptional conditions with customers indicating 90 % satisfaction with the EUIPO's services in 2022 – two points higher than in 2020. In spite of everything happening in the outside world, the EUIPO was able to vastly improve its services for users, intensify

cooperation with Member State IPOs and reinforce its collaboration with the EU's institutions by using the COVID-19 crisis as an opportunity to accelerate the move to a fully digital staff and stakeholders empowered landscape.

After what were initially unfavourable results, with a considerable drop in EUTM filings, the EUIPO moved on to operating in a 'new reality' in which both the public and private sectors must adapt to successive setbacks and shocks of both an economic and geopolitical nature. This meant concentrating on ensuring flexibility, readiness and resilience rather than focusing primarily on further efficiency of existing processes.

In addition to the anticipated changes due to the UK's decision to leave the EU, the COVID-19 crisis had an additional disrupting effect. There were successive peaks of infection, new variants and a number of countries also faced political and economic uncertainty.

As we were slowly coming out of the COVID-19 crisis and its economic aftermath, war in Europe became a reality once again with the invasion of Ukraine by Russia in February 2022, bringing in its wake renewed economic uncertainty, a significant drop in business and consumer confidence, an energy price shock, and unprecedented levels of inflation.

According to the IMF's World Economic Outlook in October 2022⁽⁴⁾, global growth

⁴ <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/Issues/2022/10/11/world-economic-outlook-october-2022>

was forecast to slow from 6 % percent in 2021 to 3.2 % in 2022 and 2.7 % in 2023 – 'the weakest growth profile since 2001 except for the global financial crisis and the acute phase of the COVID-19 pandemic.'

Resilient, proactive innovation policy

While the EUIPO's Strategic Plan for the period 2020-2025, SP2025, was drawn up in outline and consulted on before the pandemic, it was always designed to be highly adaptable and was built on a vision of delivering 'IP value for businesses and citizens in Europe'.

The plan united the EUIPO, its stakeholders, and customers around a common purpose. It was approved and published in July 2020 and formed the basis of the EUIPO's response to the COVID-19 crisis. This plan continues to guide the EUIPO's actions and successful performance.

An additional important objective of the plan was to reinforce the EUIPO's contribution as a significant actor linking a modernised IP system more closely with the EU's ambitious economic policies centred on innovation.

The COVID-19 crisis sparked intense discussions with Member State IPOs on how the IP system could contribute to alleviating the accompanying economic crisis. In parallel, a series of high-level meetings with representatives from the European Commission and the European Parliament took place in order to see how this contribution could link to the EU recovery plan.

Meetings with EU Institutions dealt with a wide range of issues and new or closer relations were forged with the DG for Research and Innovation, more than 20 SME associations, universities, companies leading the drive towards online marketplaces and enterprises who now increasingly depend on the internet for their sales and growth.



From 1 July 2020 the EUIPO began to develop a number of key initiatives intended to support SMEs:

- Pro bono advice – the EUIPO acts as intermediary linking over 265 pro bono providers with more than 1 700 SMEs requesting this service;
- Effective dispute resolution – a special non-legal service to help SMEs make informed decisions;
- An SME-dedicated section on the EUIPO website, acting as a gateway to the SME website;
- Simplifying online registration through an easy e-Filing system for registering IP rights especially designed with SMEs in mind.

These initiatives were the start of the journey that led to the introduction of the Ideas Powered for Business SME Fund, which was designed by the EUIPO during the height of the pandemic at record speed in partnership with the [European Commission](#) and the Member State IPOs.

In one of the EUIPO’s biggest achievements in the immediate aftermath of the crisis, EUR 20 million was initially set aside to help European SMEs register and exploit their intellectual property rights during 2021. This programme, set up under the auspices of the single market programme of the EU Commission, eventually evolved into a multiannual support programme for SMEs covering their IP strategy and registration needs.

Intellectual property is a strategic asset for Europe’s competitiveness. As the largest association of SMEs in the digital sector, the European DIGITAL SME Alliance, strongly advocates for the EU to support SMEs’ innovation capacity: the development, the protection and the exploitation of intellectual property by SMEs are key to Europe’s success and strategic autonomy in the digital revolution.

Sebastiano Toffaletti, Secretary General of the DIGITAL SME ALLIANCE,

EUIPN 10 years connecting the world of IP, 2021

One of the key features of the Fund is the way it leverages the existing EU Intellectual Property Network established with Member State IP Offices: services are delivered through Member State IPOs who are close to their own SMEs, speak their language for grant aiding applications, and know their needs. From the beginning, it proved a very important support instrument for small businesses to match IP rights to their ambitions for growth.

When it was initially launched, up to 50 % of the fee for national or EU trade marks or designs were covered and, importantly, an ‘IP Scan’ was included in order to help companies determine their real IP needs in consultation with experts.

An updated and improved Fund, including new services, was launched in January 2022 following the Commission’s green light, with the EUIPO’s contribution increasing to EUR 30 million over three years. In the face of the renewed economic turmoil caused by war on the EU’s borders, the Fund was increased by a further EUR 10 million in August 2022.

The latest version of the Fund is a simpler, faster and more complete scheme with trade mark and design grants increasing from 50 % to 75 % and fees for national patents now included up to EUR 750. The top five countries providing the IP Scan service are Germany, Spain, Italy, France, and Poland.

To date, the EUIPO has received more than

40 000 applications from SMEs, 77 % of which are new to intellectual property, with 94 % saying they were satisfied with the application process and 45 % of whom filed through IP representatives.

Inclusive, proactive customer service

The EUIPO’s customer strategy during 2018-2022 was strongly influenced by the realisation that IP rights needed to be more accessible to new players such as SMEs, and also adapted to the different needs of all users of the IP system, including global businesses and professional representatives.

The idea of ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach towards customer was a no longer suitable response to customers and market expectations. The EUIPO therefore set out to develop its staff and provide platforms and tools, such as the advanced AI-led technologies needed to excel in this new situation where services are better adapted to each category of customers.

Combating infringements of intellectual property is neither simple nor easy. But we believe that there is a whole space for action that must be covered by the different stakeholders, collaborating and carrying out initiatives that contribute to the rejection of counterfeit products,

leading consumers to prefer original products that comply with IP rules, labour and environmental laws, with more quality and less risk to their health and safety.

Luís Salvador Pisco, DECO, Portugal

Ten years of the European Observatory on Infringements of Intellectual Property Rights: Achievements and Perspectives, 2022

While much of the groundwork was already under way, the global pandemic accelerated change in the EUIPO and led to closer relations with the different segments of customers. This included a direct response to the emergence of the prevalence of online marketplaces and of new online business models where an assurance that IP rights are protected is even more important.

Immediately after the COVID-19 lockdowns, the EUIPO moved to help customers by extending filing deadlines on several occasions. Contacts with users also continued at a high rate, with a switch to online meetings.

The deployment of a significant number of new electronic tools has been crucial in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, as it has provided an opportunity for

remote application and provision of e-services by BPO. This approach has made it as easy as possible for users and businesses, including small and medium enterprises, giving them the opportunity to submit requests and applications with no physical contact, which minimises the risk of infection. Due to the EUIPO's continuous support and despite the challenging circumstances, our Office has met the expectations of the users and businesses related to the accessibility of the services, better organisation and introduction of new technologies, to the maximum extent.

Petko Nikolov, PhD, President of the BULGARIAN PATENT OFFICE, EUIPN 10 years connecting the world of IP, 2021

As well as bilateral exchanges, multiple online sessions took place with the EUIPO Users Group dealing with, among other things, Convergence of Practices, European and International Cooperation projects, Digital Transformation, the advanced customer services that the Office was already implementing, and enforcement issues.

The focus on technology, combined with flexible working was key to continuing to

deliver excellent service not just at the EUIPO but also in the Member State IPOs. Given the previous emphasis on preparing the workforce and Office systems for a future working environment, staff quickly adapted to remote working and were able to provide essentially unbroken service to businesses and the public at this time of crisis.

After the initial dip, trade mark demand rose sharply, driven in part by the previously mentioned growth in Chinese demand, which continued during 2020, but also by the need for companies to move business online in order to ensure continued operations in a challenging customer access and supply chain environment. In spite of fluctuations in filings, the level of service the Office delivers was constantly improved through ambitious targets set in its [Customer Service Charter](#). Since 2020, these have been in compliance or better for almost all the time, with very few exceptions.

These quality improvements were driven by discussions with users. Under SP2025 an [Integral Quality Framework](#) was introduced and a more interactive version of the examination Guidelines was introduced with over 5 000 new hyperlinks to trade mark regulations, the eSearch Case Law database, e-learning, and recent case-law from the Court of Justice.

Since 2020, more than 600 Office decisions have been audited by representatives from user associations under the framework of the [Stakeholders Quality Assurance Panels \(SQAP\)](#).

Customers now have a stronger voice in the design of EUIPO products and services. During 2021-2022, the EUIPO created nine [Customer Focus](#) teams focusing on delivering services adapted to the different customer segments and around 250 examiners were trained on understanding and adapting to customer needs and constraints.

In 2021, the EUIPO upgraded the [online application form for Designs](#). The following year a [new application programming interface \(API\) platform](#) was made available for all EUIPO customers allowing business-to-business integration and a new and improved [EUTM filing form](#) was introduced leveraging artificial intelligence improvements.

As part of its drive to provide the right response to the needs of each customer profile, the EUIPO also launched its first virtual assistant in [Easy Filing](#) – the EUIPO Chatbot. This provides general information on basic questions and doubts that first time customers may have when filing online and the possibility of faster responses to generic queries when compared to telephone calls or emails.

As part of its digital transformation programme, in 2021 the EUIPO released its first in-house image search tool, [eSearch plus](#), tackling one of the biggest challenges in the IP world – running searches for figurative marks. This image search function was incorporated into TMview in July 2022, allowing users to automatically compare images to trade mark applications in all participating IP Offices.

These and other initiatives led to the EUIPO being voted in successive years as the world's most innovative IP office by the leading IP magazine, World Trademark Review.

All these developments proved vital in maintaining and improving services through unprecedented fluctuations in demand and successive phases of the COVID-19 crisis. Applications bounced back as companies began to prepare for a future in which innovation and creativity was going to be even more important. This trend continued throughout 2021, when EUTM demand was pushed up even higher due to signs of a recovery and the shift to e-commerce.

Then in 2022, with Russia's invasion of Ukraine, demand went into unexpected reverse. In particular, EUTM filings from China, which was the top filing country in both 2020 and 2021, dropped by 40 %. This, combined with a general slowdown of European economies led to a new phase of adaptation and review by the EUIPO. The priority was to adjust to the new reality while preserving the capacity of the EUIPO to continue its operations. At the same time, anticipating the role of IP in the future recovery, it was judged critical to maintain the level of service and support to customers and the EU IP system.

Sound financial management for a resilient, motivated Office

The EUIPO's sound financial management and substantial reserves, as well as the consensus that the EU's IP system needed to be more

'joined-up' and inclusive, provided the basis for SP2025's ambitious programme.

Throughout the COVID-19 crisis and unpredictable ups and downs in demand, the EUIPO continued to balance the books, it became more productive and responsive to customers, and contributed more to the EU's IP system. This contribution extended beyond support for Member State IPOs to include support to the priorities of the European Commission and the agencies most closely connected with an innovative forward-looking and inclusive IP system.

When the EUIPO budget for 2022 and onwards was prepared, the focus was on the recovery, but as already noted, in February 2022 Russia invaded Ukraine, resulting in more economic and political uncertainty, an energy shock, and double-digit inflation.

At the very first signs of this new crisis, the EUIPO took measures to control expenditure and reduce costs. While direct filings for EUTMs and designs fell during 2022 in the aftermath of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, this was partially mitigated by an increase in international registration filings from WIPO as a result of the expansion of the Madrid and The Hague systems.

Overall, during 2022 the EUIPO received 174 152 EUTM filings, a reduction of 12 % compared with the previous year. Even though this is only slightly lower than the 2020 level, it was significantly less than initially projected, and this has impacted the EUIPO budget.

In order to adapt, the EUIPO adopted an amending budget for 2022 with reductions in running expenditure and even stricter internal efficiency targets to compensate. Strategic projects have also been reassessed and prioritised on the basis of return on investment.

Even with this setback to one element of the EUIPO's support for the Member State IP Offices, the financial contribution that the EUIPO makes increased substantially during 2018-2022 and this is expected to continue in 2023.

	2022	2022 vs 2021	2022 vs AB ₅
EUTM all filings	174 152	-12.04 %	0.38 %
Direct filings	140 930	-15.11 %	0.14 %
IRs filings	33 222	3.90 %	1.37 %
RCDs all filings	107 175	-7.42 %	-1.76 %
Direct filings	91 700	-9.36 %	-1.09 %
IRCDs filings	15 475	6.08 %	-1.58 %

Table 1. IPR applications filing volumes compared with estimations for the Work Programme 2022 and for the Amending Budget 2022- volumes adapted to market conditions – Nov. 2022.

The unexpected reduction of filings, and therefore income, reduced the EUIPO's operational result in 2022 below the level at which offsetting payments would be made to Member State IPOs in 2024, under the rules set during the last major revision of the EU Trade Mark Regulation⁽⁶⁾, in 2016.

In 2017, around EUR 28 million of the EUIPO's resources was devoted annually to cooperation with the Member State IPOs. However, the EUIPO was not contributing directly to creating stronger linkages with other parts of the EU system, which were also vital for a resilient and proactive IP system capable of contributing to innovation policy.

⁵ AB stands for Amended Budget, as defined in Art.34 "Amending budgets" of the Financial Regulation of 10th July 2019 (REGULATION BC-1-2019 OF THE BUDGET COMMITTEE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OFFICE of 10 July 2019 laying down the financial provisions applicable to the Office ("Financial Regulation

⁶ Offsetting is designed to compensate the IPOs for their contribution to EU trade marks and designs whether via promotion or through the legal system. Under the agreed formula, offsetting is paid two years after the financial result triggering them, therefore giving the offices two years to adapt. Offsetting payments are in addition to support under the European Cooperation Projects, staff resources deployed to support IPOs, and payments for Seconded National Experts who work at the EUIPO.

During 2018-22 the EUIPO increased its funding of Member State IPOs and introduced significant support for the different players in SME and innovation policy. Support included the provision of staff and direct funding, which has helped promote 'clean' trade, assisted enforcement bodies, and has made important contributions to the better working of the international IP system, via EU-funded IP projects in most global regions.

This new inclusive approach to supporting critical parts of the EU's innovation eco-system meant that, compared to 2017, EUIPO funding of EU IP system in 2022 topped almost EUR 100 million, approaching three times the annual amount contributed at the beginning of the five-year period (7).

Given the importance of this funding to the proper functioning of the EU's IP eco-system the 2022 Amending Budget prioritised on internal savings and efficiencies. It is notable that in spite of the budgetary challenge, the investment in European Cooperation projects was preserved and, compared to the 2021 figures, the sum of the direct contribution to IPOs, payments for Seconded National Experts, deployed resources and offsetting increased from EUR 34.5 million in 2021 to almost EUR 40 million in 2022 and generated a positive operating result of EUR 4.5 million.

3 Afterword

Even before COVID-19, the return of war on our doorsteps and the associated economic difficulties, it was clear that the benefits of protecting innovation and creativity must be shared between large and small businesses and both developed and developing nations.

Along with the IP Offices in the Member States, international partners, those businesses that rely on IP rights, and the citizens who share an interest in a proper functioning IP system, the EUIPO has been working to democratise IP rights, with a particular focus on SMEs.

By the time of the COVID-19 lockdowns, the modernisation of the EU's IP system – supported by the EUIPO through the EUIPN and other networks – had already helped to create a robust system able to withstand the unprecedented shock of a global pandemic. This evolution was at a particularly advanced stage at the EUIPO, given the decision put into action during 2018-2020 to bring remote working within the reach of all members of staff.

Did we expect a pandemic, or anticipate an almost flawless transition to remote working? Certainly not. We were reaping the benefits of having invested relentlessly in resilience and technology. We were also fortunate, in a sense that these investments initiated in 2018 were completed a month before the pandemic – but without claiming to have a crystal ball, we also made our own luck. In this, I include the management of the IP Offices of the Member States and many other IP partners who also

saw the need for change, especially given the pace of technology.

Promoting resilience and dealing with unexpected events as part of the EUIPO's already sophisticated disaster recovery plan was just part of the story. Other issues were at play including equality of opportunity and flexible working models. This strategy proved to be a game changer.

Of course, the pandemic, as well as sickness and bereavement, combined with general isolation and problems of morale, which also called for a different style of communication and leadership and a new resolve from all our co-workers.

It is a tribute to the staff at the EUIPO that we were both able to cope with huge and disruptive fluctuations in demand for trade mark and design rights, while also developing support systems in cooperation with the European Commission and Member States to help mitigate the economic consequences of the initial crisis and foster a recovery.

Since then, unfortunately, crisis has built upon crisis, with the war in Ukraine, the rapidly increasing cost of energy, and the return of double-digit inflation. The IP 'gold rush' generated in part by the shift to an online economy and demand from China, among other factors, has faltered – for now. I am convinced that this is only temporary, since there is no convincing evidence that IP rights are becoming less attractive to the businesses that will shape the future.

However, we are once again entering unknown territory and, as always, the EUIPO has taken steps to prudently manage this new crisis. The immediate drop in demand has had an inevitable impact on the EUIPO's budget, which will be reflected in forward spending plans.

Nevertheless, during this even more difficult economic phase, the EUIPO's strategy of supporting positive change in the EU's innovation eco-system needs to continue, whether by helping SMEs, continuing to modernise systems, keeping on top of research and pro-actively filling any perceived gaps in the system.

I am proud to be part of the EUIPO's story, both as a member of the management team for more than a decade and as Executive Director during this critical period. I am also happy to stand behind the decisions made, in partnership with the European Commission and Member State IPOs, to be part of 'the solution'.

What has been most remarkable is the even closer cooperation between the EUIPO and other EU bodies, especially the Commission. This is now a true partnership, in implementation of actions whether via EU-funded projects all over the globe, or via the very successful SME fund or our involvement in the innovation policy eco-system.

Building on the already established relationships within the European Union Intellectual Property Network, it has been possible to catalyse actions to support SMEs

7 EUR 60 million in support of Member State IP Offices and approximately EUR 40 million in support of European Commission policies.

and come to a better understanding via the Observatory on the role of IP rights in society and the economy. This has had a profound and lasting impact on policy decisions not just in the EU, but globally.

The work of the Observatory is essential for the European Commission Directorate General for Trade in its efforts to improve IPR protection and enforcement in third countries. This includes the valuable cooperation in the preparation of the Commission Third Country Reports and the Counterfeit and Piracy Watch Lists as well as the support to IP-Keys -the EU-funded IP programmes in third countries- and to the “IP network” of EU Delegations.

Maria Martin-Prat, Deputy Director-General for Trade, EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Ten years of the European Observatory on Infringements of Intellectual property Rights: Achievements and Perspectives , 2022

In relation to respecting IP rights, everything starts with education. The Observatory research was acknowledged to be a significant

factor in the [2020 Council conclusions](#) on digital education, where the importance of intellectual property is recognised and endorsed, paving the door for future action.

In further recognition of the fact that IP assets are often the most important assets of companies, in 2021 the Council decided to include IP crime among the top 10 priorities for the European multidisciplinary platform against criminal threats (EMPACT), which sets the priorities of law enforcement in the EU in the field of organised crime for 2022-2025.

On the international scene, the example of the EU has continued to have a positive impact on IP rights and their protection, which is so important for all businesses, but especially for the smaller ones who are the ‘seedlings’ of the future.

As was noted earlier in this report, the current EUIPO investment support for the wider IP system now amounts to more than EUR 100 million annually. The events of 2022 mean there will be an interruption in offsetting funding for Member State IPOs, in 2024 only, but other cooperation support will continue and has indeed been strengthened this year.

Whatever the future holds, we must hold onto the truth that the IP system is there to support business and citizens and to promote a better future for all. The EUIPO has been able to contribute due to its solid financial foundations and the ongoing professionalism of our staff, combined with a level of demand

for EU-level IP titles, which continues to be strong and sustainable.

One of the most positive outcomes of the challenges that the EU and its IP system have faced has been a much closer relationship with the EU’s innovation strategy. The positive results achieved by our SMEs are the clearest evidence of this.

Thinking of the health of the system as a whole is what helped us prepare for COVID-19. It also sustains us through the multiple crises that now surround us, and will help us win the eventual recovery.

As always, we are stronger together.



Annex: Facts and Data EUIPO 2018 – 2022

Figure 1. Total EUTM and RCD filings 2018 - 2022	19
Figure 2. EUTM and RCD filings 2018- 2022, direct filings and international registrations	19
Figure 3. EUIPO Unit Cost Evolution. Unit cost deflated to 2020	20
Figure 4. Offsetting, SNEs, deployed resources and direct contributions to National IP Offices between 2018 and 2022	20
Figure 5. EUIPO Budget execution achievements	21
Figure 6. EUIPO support for the IP System	21
Figure 7. EUIPO contribution to Supporting the EU IP system	22
Figure 8. Ideas Powered for Business Fund SMEs supported	22
Figure 9. IP Offices participating in flagship IP tools	23
Figure 10. TMView, DesignView, TMclass DesignClass implementations map	23
Figure 11. Trade Marks available in TMView	24
Figure 12. EU Funded International IP Projects in 2022	25
Table 1. IPR applications filing volumes compared with estimations for the Work Programme 2022 and for the Amending Budget 2022- volumes adapted to market conditions – Nov. 2022	13

Figure 1. Total EUTM and RCD filings 2018 - 2022

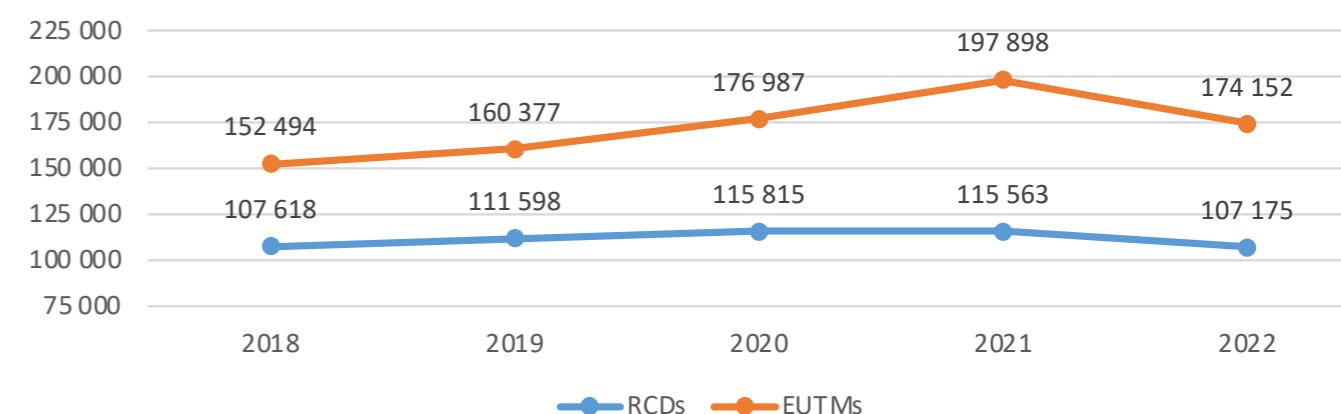


Figure 2. EUTM and RCD filings 2018- 2022, direct filings and international registrations

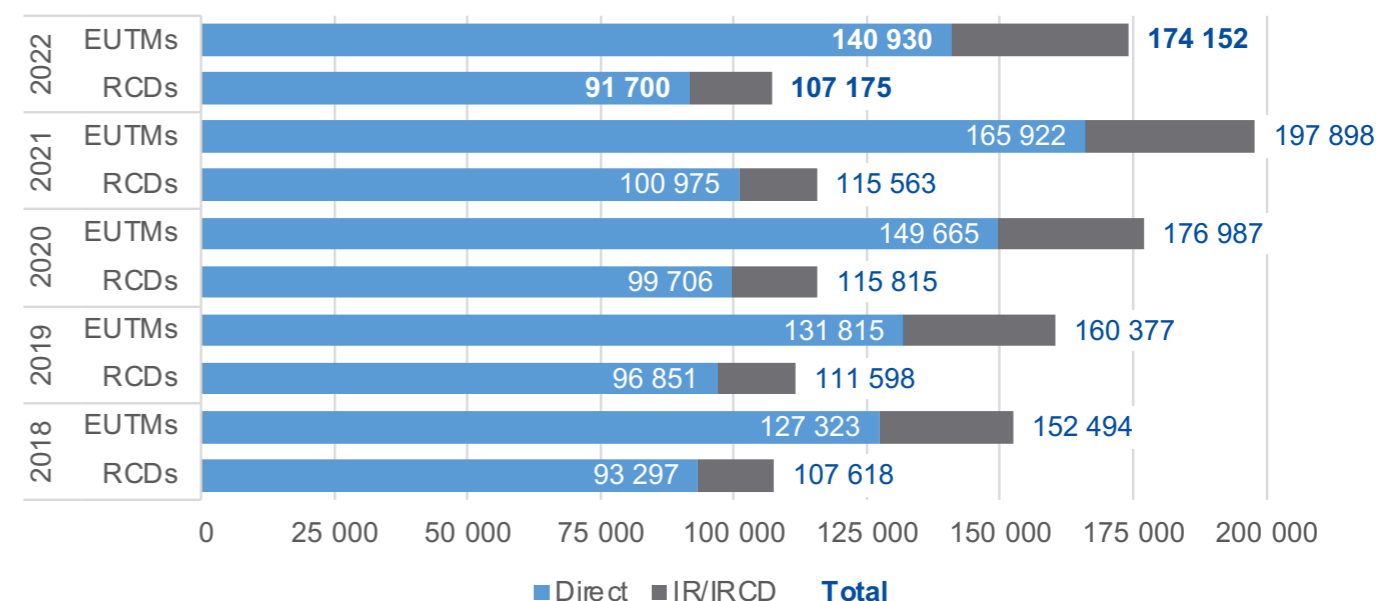


Figure 3. EUIPO Unit Cost Evolution. Unit cost deflated to 2020

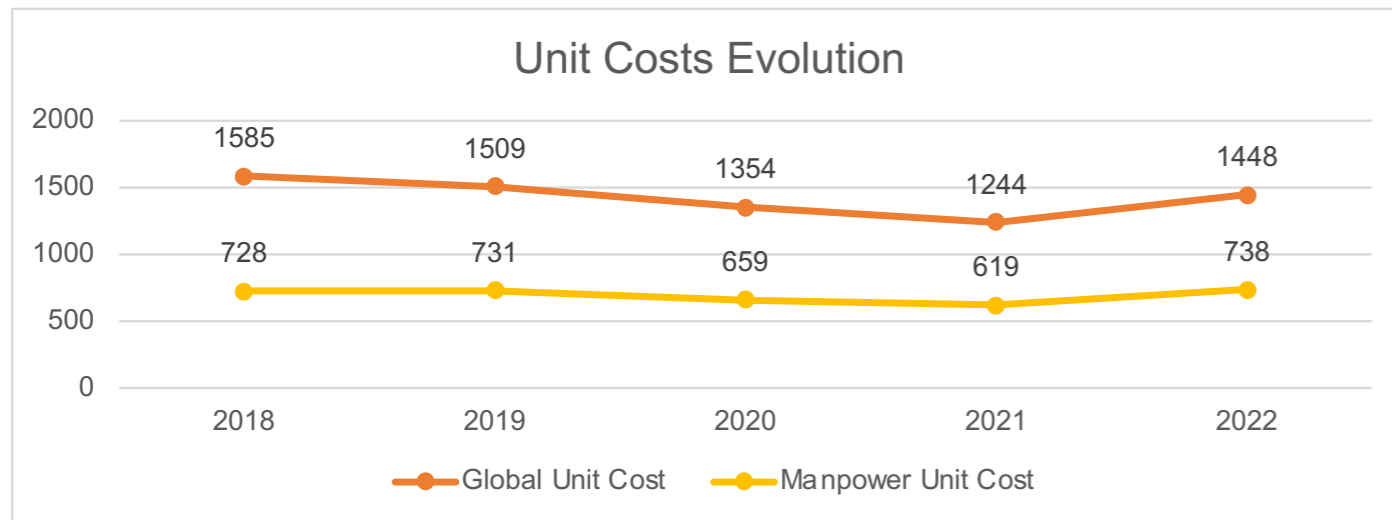


Figure 4. Offsetting, SNEs, deployed resources and direct contributions to National IP Offices between 2018 and 2022

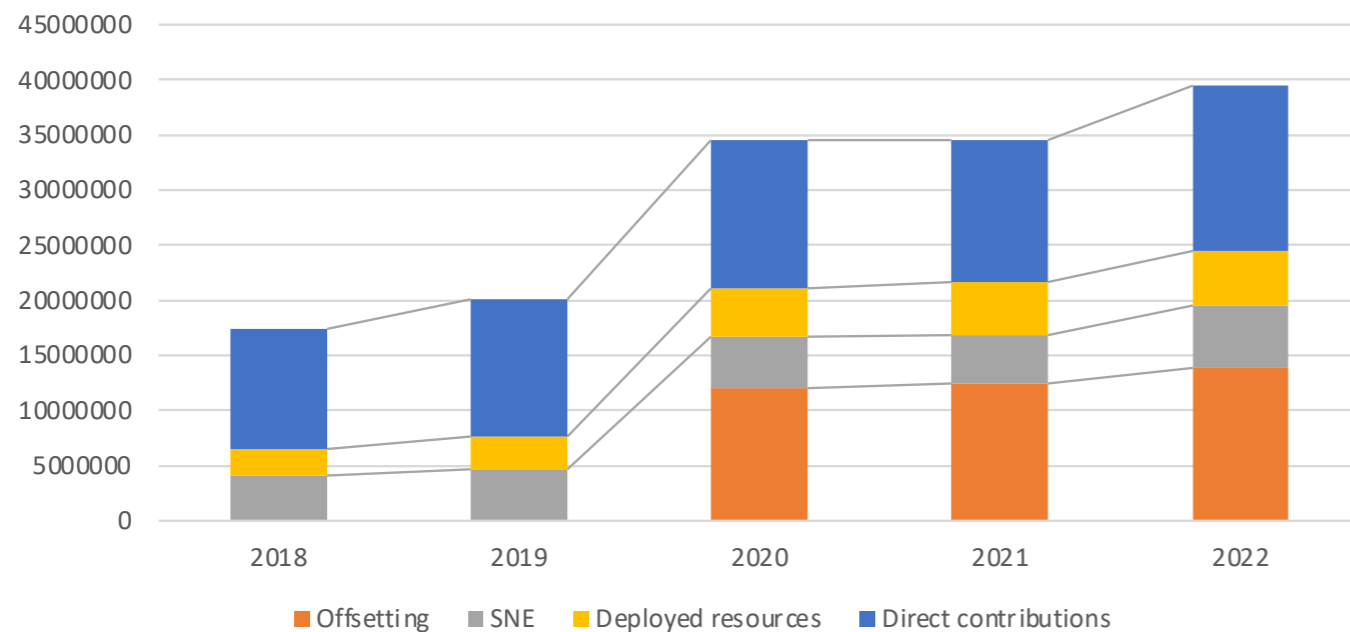


Figure 5. EUIPO Budget execution achievements

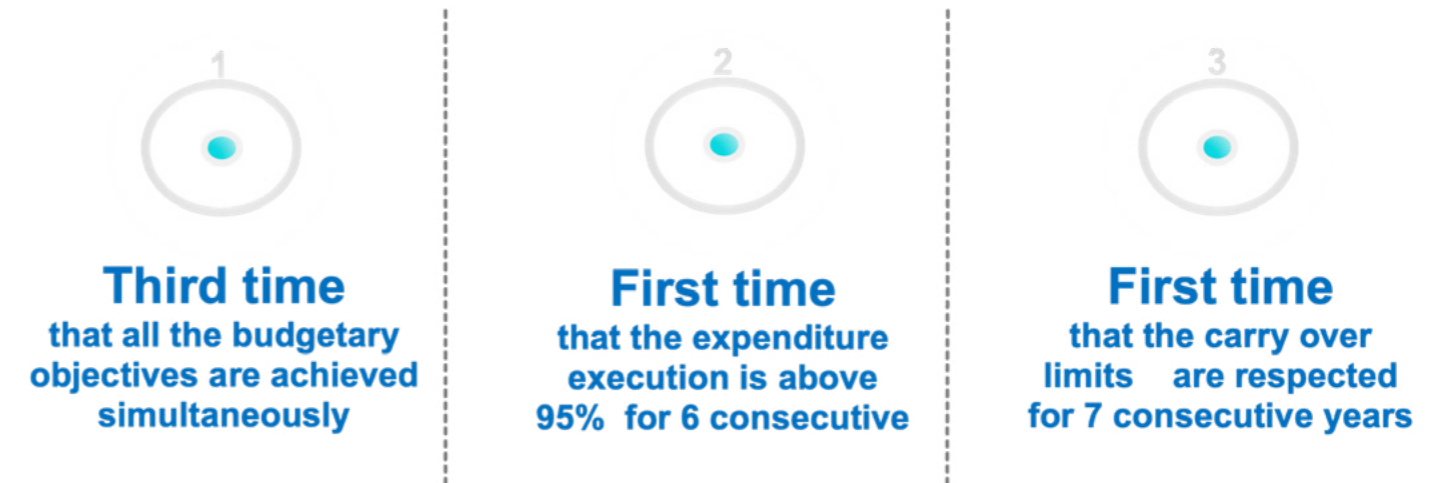


Figure 6. EUIPO support for the IP System

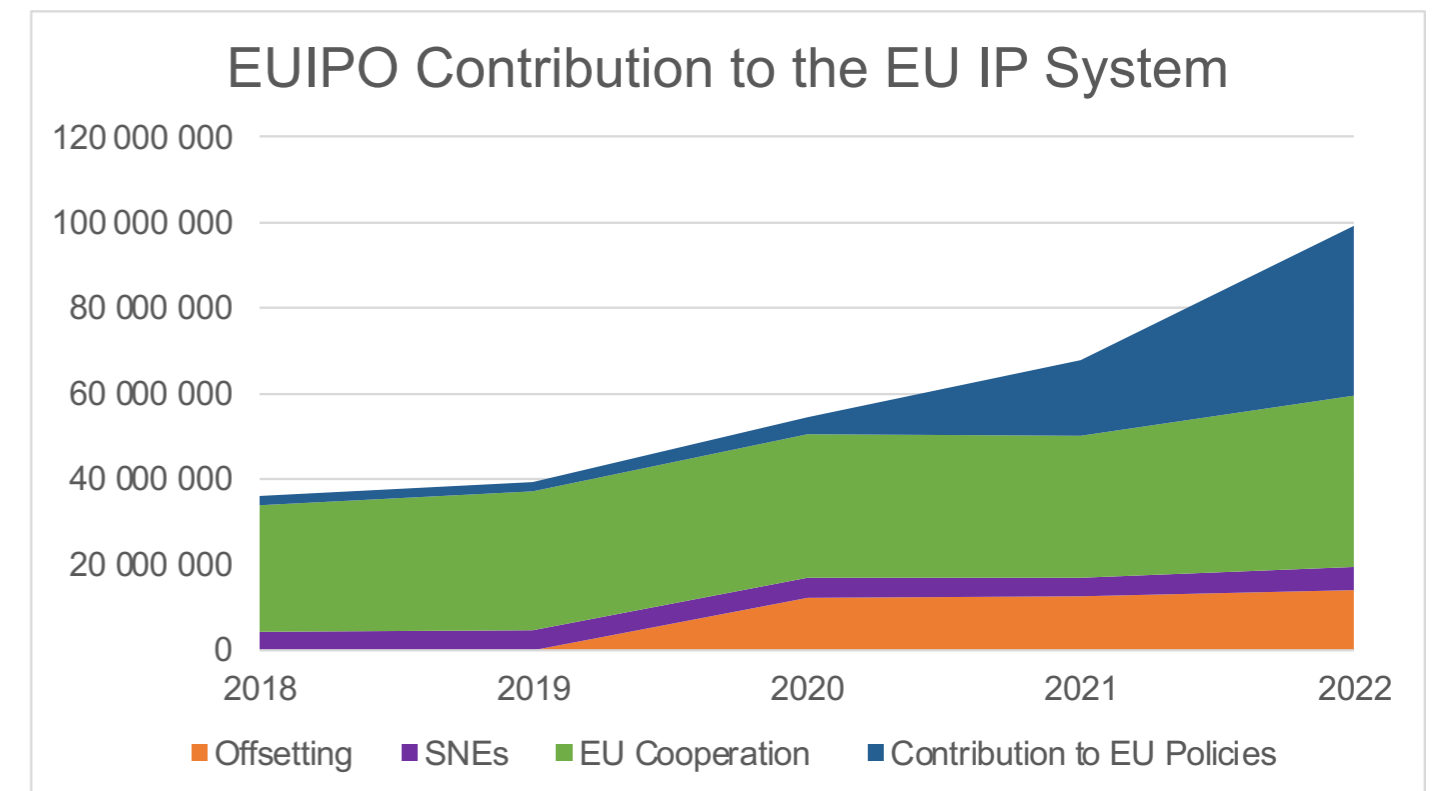
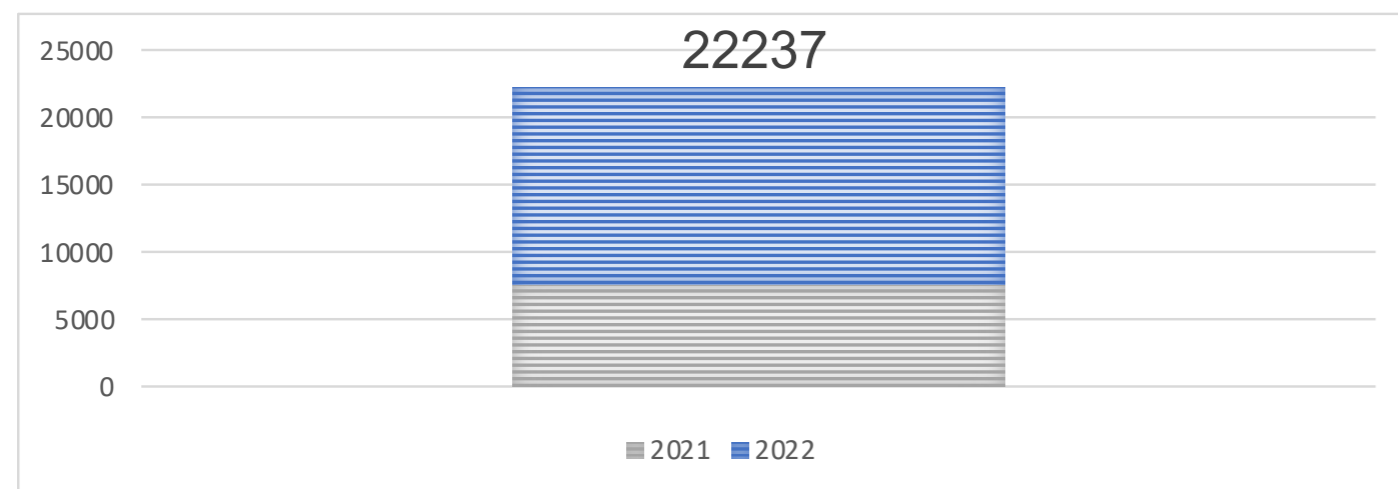


Figure 7. EUIPO contribution to Supporting the EU IP system⁷

	EU Cooperation	Offsetting	Payments to SNEs	Contribution to EU Policies	Total EUIPO Contribution to the EU IP System
2018	29 929 185.30		4 037 983.10	2 031 100.00	35 998 268.40
2019	32 510 072.40		4 624 919.01	1 927 823.00	39 062 814.41
2020	33 825 696.30	11 973 646.72	4 712 849.03	3 844 054.80	54 356 246.85
2021	33 193 295.30	12 371 605.54	4 480 441.67	17 670 949.40	67 716 291.91
2022	39 965 181.80	13 877 919.63	5 581 795.78	39 735 344.40	99 160 241.61

Figure 8. Ideas Powered for Business Fund SMEs supported



⁷ EU Cooperation amounts refer to the amounts paid for cooperation activities with EU Member States according to art 152 EUTMR. It includes direct payments to EU IPOs and Deployed Resources. Contribution to EU Policies includes EU-funded projects and the SME Fund.

Figure 9. IP Offices participating in flagship IP tools

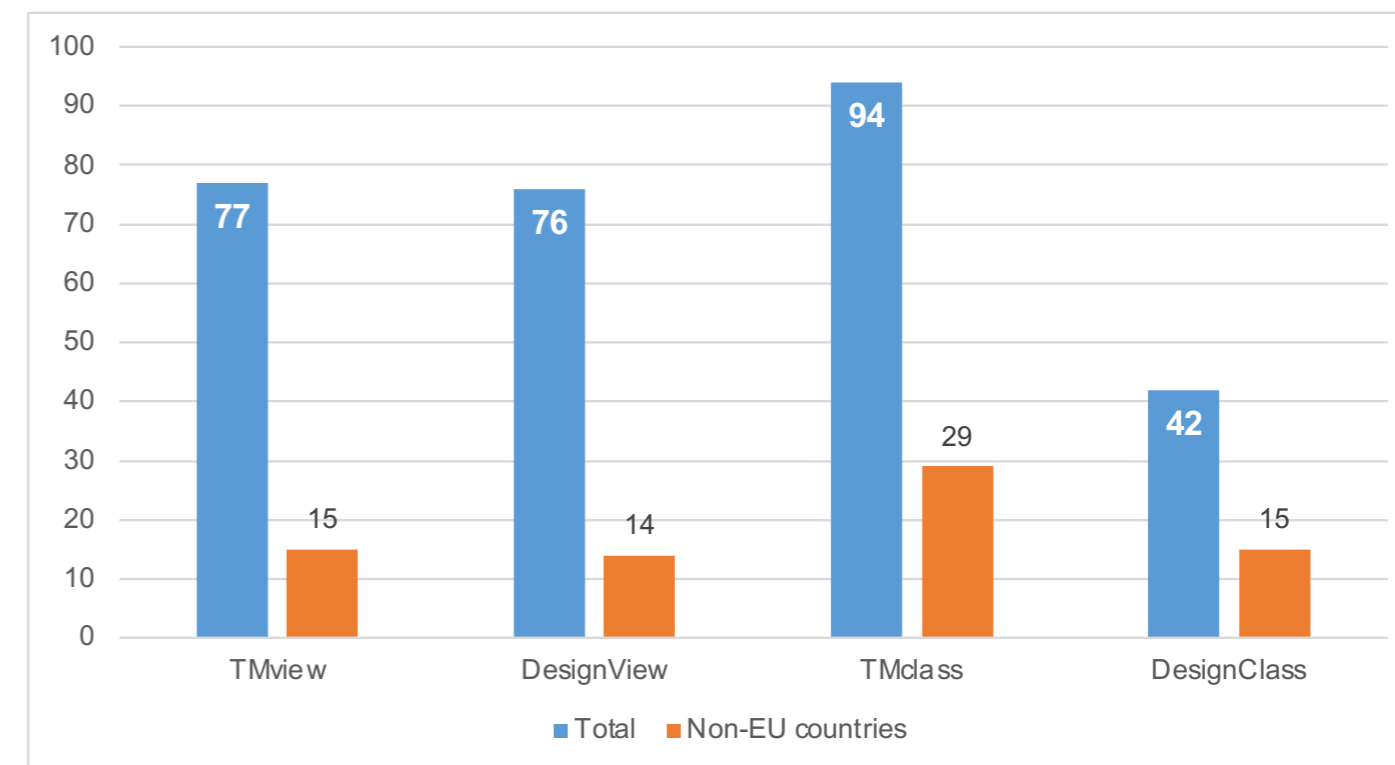


Figure 10. TMView, DesignView, TMclass DesignClass implementations map

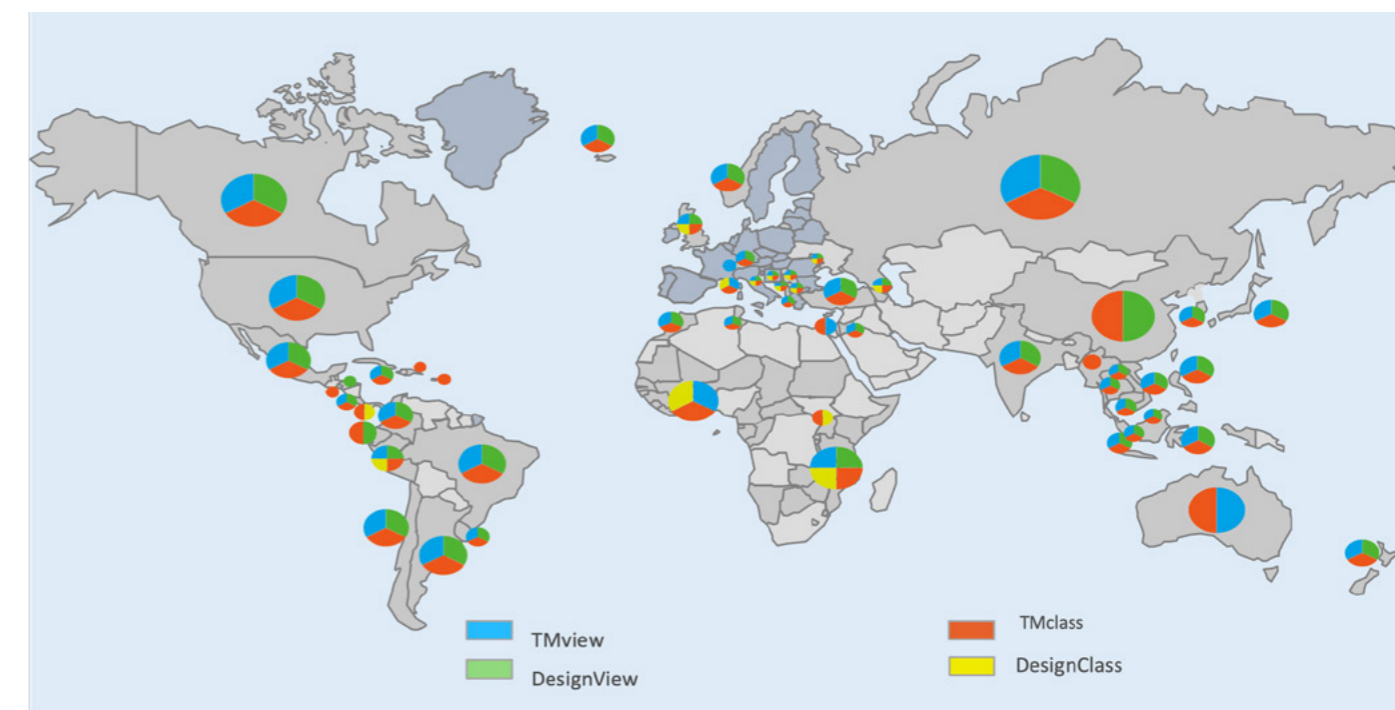


Figure 11. Trade Marks available in TMView

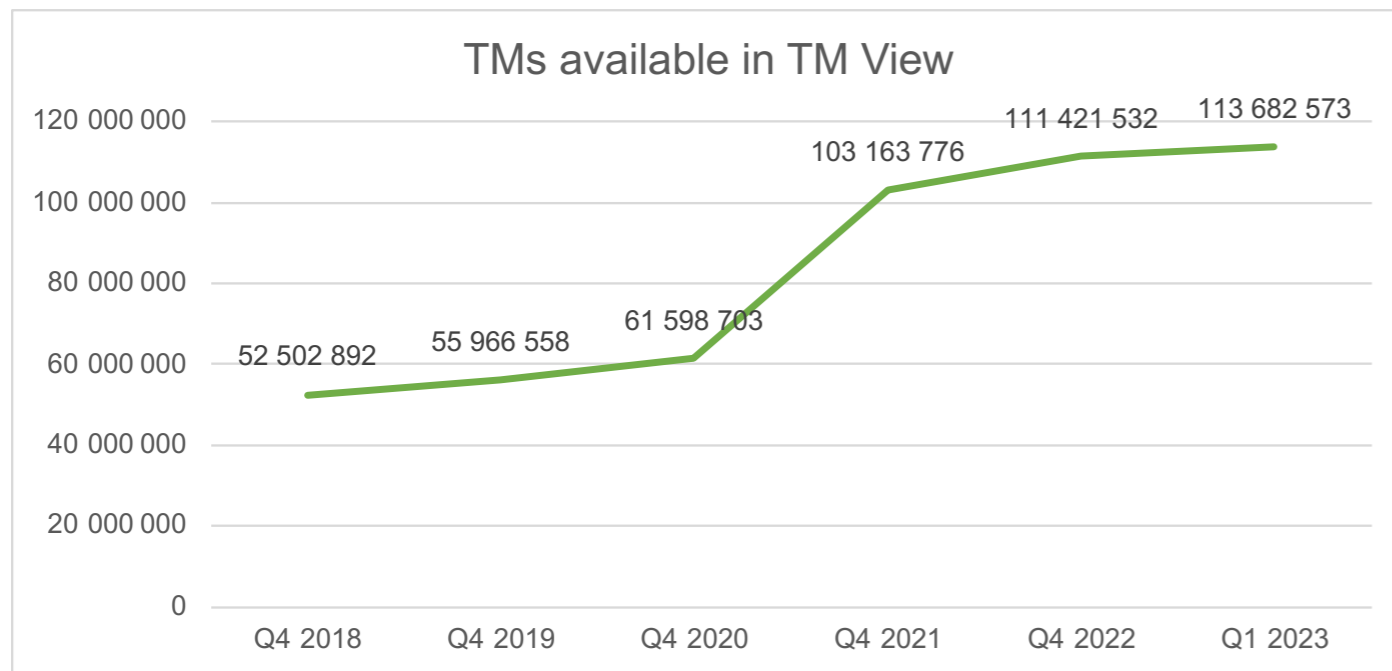
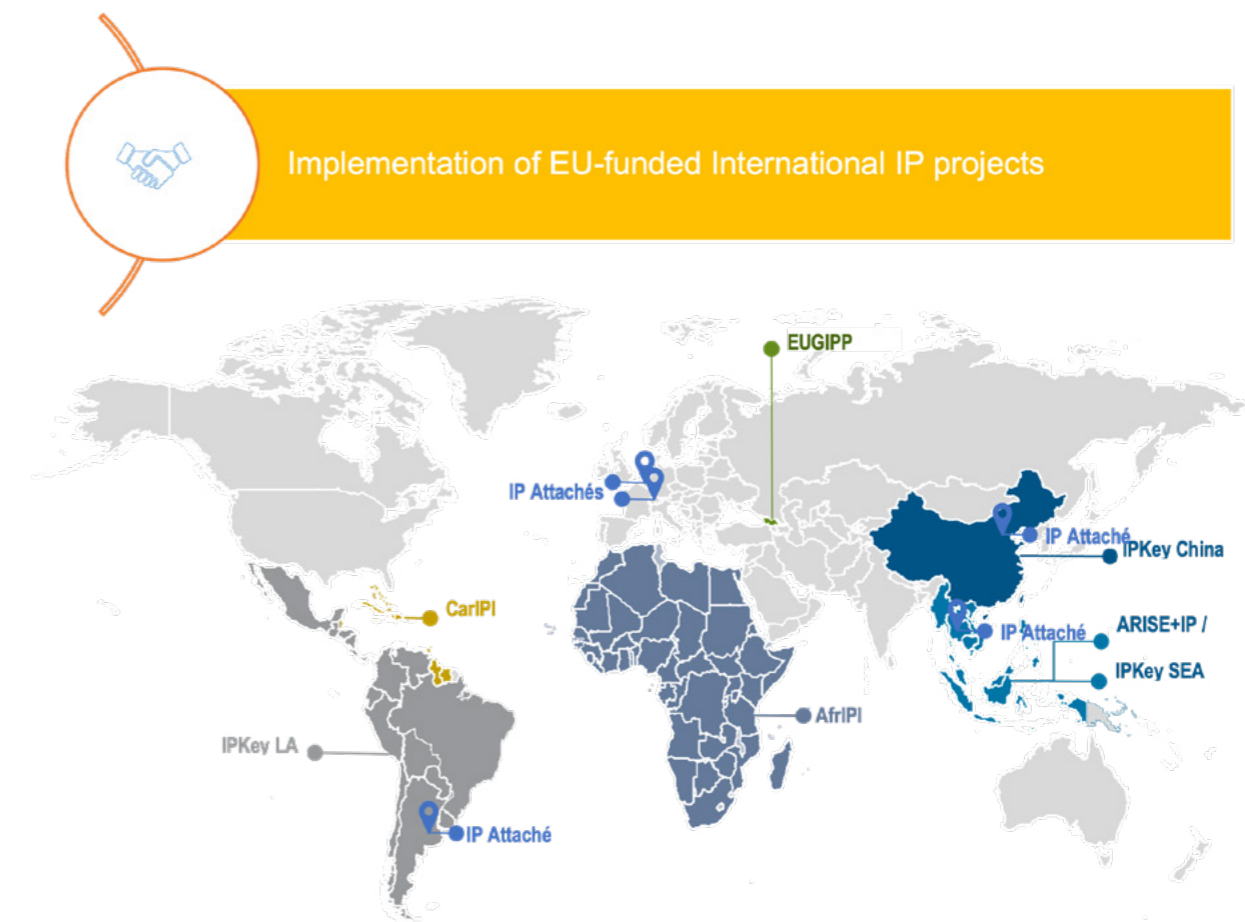


Figure 12. EU Funded International IP Projects in 2022



Avenida de Europa, 4,
E-03008 - Alicante
Spain

www.euiipo.europa.eu

